

## CHAPTER VI

VIVIAN

GBBT 1826

Disraeli was never easily discouraged. His twenty-first birthday, which he celebrated on the 21st of December, a few days after the crash in the City, must have been gloomy enough; but, foiled in his practical ambition, he turned again to literature and within four months had produced a book which became the talk of London and won for him celebrity or notoriety in a measure that few secure when they have barely crossed the threshold of manhood.

In the previous year a novel called *Tremaine* had appeared which was much read and talked about at the time, though it is now forgotten. It was a 'novel of fashionable life' and its popularity had given a certain vogue to this form of literature. The author, Robert Ward, better known by his later name of Plumer Ward, was a person of some prominence in Parliament and society; but his book was published anonymously, and owed not a little of its success to the mystery in which its authorship was for some time carefully wrapt. As it happened, the Disraeli family rented Hyde House, Ward's residence near Amersham, for some months in the autumn of 1825, and here Disraeli always said he wrote *Vivian Grey*, taking the idea from *Tremaine* and completing the book before he was twenty-one. The link between the Disraelis and Ward was Ward's solicitor, Austen, who, living